

JOINING FORCES

Joining Families



HELPING, CARING AND LEARNING

Care for Yourself to Keep the Army Family Strong

*Remember what flight attendants say just prior to take off?
“In the unlikely event that you need to use an oxygen mask put yours
on before trying to assist others.”*

In order to care for others in times of crisis, you must care for yourself. Taking care of yourself includes recognizing the importance and value of your work. It also includes eating healthfully, taking time off, and making a point to rest and exercise regularly. You are an important part of the Army Community Service team. Caring for yourself is part of keeping the ARMY FAMILY strong.

Families look to the ACS community to resolve a multitude of problems that often have no ready or easy solutions. The work you do takes a toll both physically and emotionally. Perhaps you sit at the intersection of financial assistance, childcare, new parent support, deployment readiness or another of our many ACS activities and programs. You know and carry some of the burden of our Army Families as they seek your help and direction.

Caregiver burden, compassion fatigue and burnout are all terms that have been used to describe the emotional exhaustion that can result from the demands of caring for others. The constant

participation of care and service providers in meeting the needs of others can make it difficult to sustain energy and to communicate with sensitivity. Those you help, as well as your own families, can often see the extra burden you carry in caring for them. You may appear tired, or possibly even irritable, blaming or guilt-ridden. These signs can all be part of caregiver burden, compassion fatigue and burnout that indicate you need time to take care of yourself in order to be able to continue to help others. By modeling healthy behaviors you influence and improve the lives of those you touch, including your staff and our ARMY FAMILY community.

For further information that may be helpful see these web links:

<http://www.centerforthestudyoftraumaticstress.org>

<http://www.centerforthestudyoftraumaticstress.org/research.family.shtml>

<http://www.centerforthestudyoftraumaticstress.org/education.courage.shtml>